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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the discussions held at a conference of public sector executives and human resource managers designed to address the problems of attracting and keeping good workers in public service. Presentations made by the governor of Georgia, federal officials, educators, and regional representatives in three plenary sessions emphasized (1) the impact of social issues; (2) the impact and challenge of technology; and (3) ethics and the public sector's image. Following these sessions and group discussion, the conference participants suggested ways to improve the image of public service in order to attract and retain more qualified employees. Among issues addressed were the need for innovative strategies for recruitment and hiring, for improving and workplace environment, for accommodating family-work life needs and to offer other benefits now commonplace in the private sector. The participants also suggested ways to address the many social and technology-related issues that impinge on the work force. Finally, local, state, and federal participants meeting separately set objectives for each level and suggested action steps for the future. (KC)

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REPORT ON BUILDING TOMORROW'S PUBLIC SERVICE

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March 22 - 23, 1990
Lake Lanier Islands, Georgia

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Challenge 21...

Building Tomorrow's Public Service

Report of the
Multilevel Public Sector Leadership Symposium Held
March 22-23, 1990
at
Lake Lanier Islands, Georgia

Convened by...

the State of Georgia, Governor Joe Frank Harris

the U. S. Department of Labor, Secretary Elizabeth H. Dole

the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Secretary Louis W. Sullivan

the U. S. Department of Education, Secretary Lauro F. Cavazos

and

the U. S. Office of Personnel Management, Director Constance Berry Newman

Hosted by...

Joe D. Tanner, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Labor

Charles E. Storm, Commissioner, Georgia State Merit System

Jim E. Higdon, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Daniel L. Lowry, Regional Administrator, U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

Thomas T. Williams, Regional Director, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services

John F. Will,III, Secretary's Regional Representative, U. S. Department of Education

John W. Ehlers, Acting Regional Director, U. S. Office of Personnel Management

Joseph J. Juska, Executive Director, Atlanta Federal Executive Board

James V. Burgess, Jr., Executive Director, Georgia Municipal Association

Jerry R. Griffin, Executive Director, Association County Commissioners of Georgia

The University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Georgia Center for Continuing Education

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 22, 1990

I am delighted to extend greetings to all those representing the Atlanta Federal Executive Board, the State of Georgia, and the local Atlanta Area Government Agencies as you gather on Lake Lanier Island for "Challenge 21 -- Building Tomorrow's Public Service."

As the United States prepares to enter the 21st Century, we find that we are challenged with a host of new issues that will require our combined energies to resolve. From education to employment opportunities to international economic shifts that will affect our nation's economy -- all require us to begin planning now so that America can maintain her leadership position in the world. The public sector will play a vital role in this process.

"Challenge 21" is a wonderful example of how Federal, State, and local officials can combine talent and energy in an effort to address the new century. What you do here will not only help to better prepare Atlanta area public servants to meet the coming changes but also enable them to provide better services to the public. Government service is a noble calling and a public trust. Your participation in this symposium demonstrates your commitment to excellence in serving the American people. I commend all those whose vision and foresight have led to the organization of this unique event, and I encourage all those attending to keep up your good efforts toward maintaining a quality public workforce.

Barbara joins me in sending best wishes for a memorable and productive event. God bless you.

George Bush

As we approach the 21st Century there is growing concern over evolving demographic, economic, and social trends which are beginning to affect our nation. Numerous reports issued by both public and private sector interests have stressed that:

there will continue to be significant geographic and occupational shifts in employment as the availability of jobs diminishes in goods-producing industries and increases in service-producing industries;

as the economy adjusts to technological change and the need to meet increased international competition many new and existing jobs will require workers to exercise higher levels of knowledge and skill;

the population and its resulting workforce will grow more slowly and the pool of young workers entering the workforce will shrink, while the average age of the population and workforce will rise significantly;

the proportion of the workforce and pool of available entrants coming into the workforce that are minority and/or female will rise substantially;

most of the growth that will occur in the workforce will come from groups in the population that have traditionally been underutilized and/or are not ready to enter the job market because of limited work experience and/or formal education; and

the nation's population shift from the "Frost Belt States" of the North and Midwest to the "Sun Belt States" of the South and West will continue.

Many employers, including public sector employers throughout the Southeast, are beginning to realize how these various demographic, economic, and social trends are affecting them. For example, while two-thirds of the people in America will live in the "Sun Belt States" by the year 2000, 18 out of every 100 will live in just the eight Southeast states, 3 out of every 100 will live in Georgia, and 1 out of every 100 people in the U. S. will live in the Atlanta metropolitian area.

This shift in population is not only resulting in economic growth throughout the Southeast region, its states and localities, it also brings with it increased demands on the public sector employer...demands for more and better services, and for an infrastructure that will support private sector investment and continued economic growth. These demands for more and better public services are forcing public sector employers to take a closer look at their ability to attract and retain high quality employees.

In terms of employment, currently almost 1 in 6 workers in the eight Southeast States, and in the Atlanta metropolitian area, works within the public sector. Atlanta is not only the capital of Georgia, which means the area has a high concentration of State employees, its metropolitan area is made up of 18 counties and over 81 municipalities, and it is also the Southeast regional headquarters for many Federal government agencies. In an effort to better understand the changes and challenges they face as the 21st Century approaches, Federal, State, and local government leaders throughout the Atlanta metropolitan area took a bold new step.

During the period March 22 through 23, 1990, the State of Georgia, Governor Joe Frank Harris, together with representatives of U. S. Department of Labor, Secretary Elizabeth H. Dole; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Secretary Louis W. Sullivan; U. S. Department of Education, Secretary

> **raise the level of awareness Atlanta area public sector employers have of the trends, changes and challenges to be faced as the 21st Century approaches, and how their staffing and program functions will be affected;**
>
> **facilitate cooperation between all levels of the public service to collaboratively strategize and develop action plans to address the staffing and programmatic challenges facing them; and**
>
> **raise the level of citizen awareness of the positive steps being planned and taken by the metropolitan Atlanta public sector to *build a quality public workforce, provide citizens with quality services, and foster greater public trust.***

Hosted and supported by some twenty-two Federal, State, and local officials and their agencies, ***Challenge 21*** brought together the top-level public sector executives and human resource managers from thirty-four Federal agencies, twenty-nine State agencies, eight counties, eighteen municipalities, eight local school boards and postsecondary educational institutions, two public hospitals, one public transportation authority, and six other public entities from throughout the metropolitan Atlanta area.

For two days some 200 top public sector leaders, who as a group represented about forty percent of all Atlanta area public employers and fifty percent of all public employees, actively participated in plenary sessions, discussion groups, and jurisdictional caucuses and began the process of ***Building Tomorrow's Public Service.***

The Challenge...

> ***"I applaud you for spending your time asking some of the questions that should be asked about the public sector, our workforce, and our strategy for dealing with the future."***

Governor Joe Frank Harris joined representatives of Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos, and U. S. Office of Personnel Management Director Constance Newman to convene ***Challenge 21.*** As he addressed the symposium Governor Harris admonished participants when he said, "You can grow only when you have a vision of what you want to be and a vision of what you want to become." As he pointed out that the conference was "plowing new ground," the Governor told participants, "I applaud you for spending your time asking some of the questions that should be asked about the public sector, our workforce, and our strategy for dealing with the future."

Joe Frank Harris
Governor of Georgia

"Government leaders, legislatures must provide an essential new environment for effective leadership and public support...Educational institutions and agencies of government must work to enlarge the base of talent available for committed public service...Taxpayers should demand and should receive first class performance with the highest ethical standards."

David O. Williams
Deputy Secretary of Labor

Deputy Secretary of Labor David O. Williams, representing Secretary Dole, established the issues of education and leadership as major concerns that symposium participants must deal with. "Unless we solve the education deficit in the South," Williams said, "a long-term future is in serious trouble." Williams pointed out that the growing population of poor, undereducated citizens, which is disproportionally Black and minority, will challenge our capacity to solve emerging economic and social problems. By year 2020 Blacks will make up fifteen percent of the U. S. population, 1 in 5 school children and 1 in 6 people in the workforce will be Black. And, Williams said, "for many Blacks, there is becoming a two-tiered society in many parts of this country and in many cities in this country." "Governmental leaders and legislatures," Williams challenged, "must provide an essential new environment for effective leadership and public support." Furthermore, he said, "educational institutions and agencies of government must work to enlarge the base of talent available for committed public service." "Taxpayers," Williams said, "should demand and should receive first-class performance with the highest ethical standards." As he closed his remarks, the Deputy Assistant Secretary set several goals for public sector leaders. He challenged symposium participants to:

- do a better job of attracting people into the public sector and retaining those people;
- commit to fully integrating the workforce, not through lip-service, but by making sure that individuals have the skills needed to overcome economic barriers;
- improve the education and skill level of current workers;
- simplify hiring processes and improve government pay, benefits, and working conditions; and
- learn to take advantage of the new technologies and information exchange to get better performance.

Finally, as far as leadership is concerned, Williams said, "government leaders must take action to rebuild public trust in government by providing a framework in which government agencies can exercise greater flexibility in managing programs and personnel."

"If we fall behind and let the private sector find better solutions that will attract more of the very scarce labor pool...we are going to become the employer of last resort...we are going to become the employer that gets only those people who couldn't find a job in the private sector."

Representing U. S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan, Assistant Secretary Thomas S. McFee warned symposium participants that social issues such as adolescent childbearing, economic disenfranchisement, homelessness, drug abuse, and adult illiteracy are major concerns which the public sector must address. However, he pointed out, critical issues such as these, issues which

impact on our economy and our nation's ability to be competitive in the global market, also impact on the public sector's ability to provide services and develop the infrastructure necessary for private sector growth. The critical issues facing the public sector, McFee said, can only be dealt with through cooperation and the efforts of a high quality public service. In order to have that high quality public service the Assistant Secretary said that, "the public workforce must become the employer of choice." In emphasizing the need for cooperation, McFee said that we need more discussions and conferences like ***Challenge 21*** and that as public employers we should work together to develop strategies for making the best use of all our workers, strategies which don't discriminate. McFee said our challenge is not just to find ways to attract and retain women and minorities, but "to make them full partners in our organizations." The Assistant Secretary urged participants to address the issues of diversity in the workforce. The public sector, McFee charged, "is going to have to work much harder." "If we fall behind," he said, "and let the private sector find better solutions that will attract more of the very scarce labor pool...we are going to become the employer of last resort...we're going to become the employer that gets only those people who couldn't find a job in the private sector."

Thomas S. McFee
Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services

"Workforce 2000 studies provide both challenges and opportunities for all levels of the public sector...Challenges which we must face in a positive spirit of cooperation, striving constantly to create an environment that encourages new approaches to the education of our citizens."

Thomas E. Anfinson
Deputy Under Secretary
Department of Education

Thomas E. Anfinson, Deputy Under Secretary of Education, urged symposium participants to address the issues of school dropouts, the quality of school graduates, and adult illiteracy. He expressed the concern of Secretary Lauro F. Cavazos that, "If America is to enter the 21st Century in a competitive mode against industrialized nations of the world, an educated workforce is essential." "The Workforce 2000 studies," Anfinson said, "provide both challenges and opportunities for all levels of the public sector." He stressed that today's workplace, more than ever before, demands that American youth have a solid background in math, in English, and in basic reasoning. "But," he said, "too many of today's children, particularly those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, are not getting the education to which they are entitled." He concurred with Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor Williams that we must solve the education deficit if we are to succeed. "Millions of unskilled and semi-skilled positions that once provided employment to people with limited education are disappearing," Anfinson said. However, the Deputy Under Secretary pointed out, "If America meets the education goals established by the administration, by the year 2000 employers will have an abundance of qualified employees from which to choose." Furthermore, Anfinson said, "The services the public sector provides will be of the highest quality because our workforce will be the best educated, trained, knowledgable, interested, and committed." He concluded his remarks by expressing Secretary Cavazos' desire that symposium participants "address the challenges we face in a positive spirit of cooperation and strive constantly to create an environment that encourages new approaches to the education of our citizens."

"If we're going to be able to compete and entice new workers into government...If we're going to be able to justify better benefits and compensation, then our image is going to have to reflect that."

Bill Phillips
Deputy Director, U. S. OPM

In his opening comments, Bill Phillips, Deputy Director of the U. S. Office of Personnel Management, expressed Director Newman's enthusiastic support of the purpose and goals of ***Challenge 21***. He told symposium participants that he, Director Newman, and OPM believe that conferences such as this one, which explore concrete answers to the issues raised in Workforce 2000 and Civil Service 2000, are the mechanisms through which necessary changes will occur. "We talk about the year 2000 a lot, and we're looking towards the new century and a change of millennium, but," he said, "the fact is that changes are not waiting for the calendar...Those changes are facing us today...And, for the Civil Service of America this challenge has very deep implications." "If we do not face up to them and address them immediately," Phillips warned, "the very ability to govern this nation and to govern our state and local entities is going to be at risk." Changes in technology and the very mission of many public agencies will result in an increasing growth in white collar and professional occupations, and the need for greater reading and math skills. "Our public sector's workforce must be better educated, more literate, and better skilled," Phillips said. "This means that government will require a larger share of what is a smaller pie. Just as the total number of entry-level workers is decreasing, and just as the skills of this reduced workforce are being called into question, the government will have to compete with private industry for more of an increasingly scarce commodity...Human Resources."

"Can we compete?" Phillips asked. "Yes, I think we can!" he answered. If we're going to be able to compete and entice new workers into government...If we're going to be able to justify better benefits and compensation, then our image is going to have to reflect that," Phillips said. As he closed his remarks, the Deputy Director of OPM told symposium participants, "Together, I think we've all sounded a clear alarm signal, but we have also indicated that there are answers. They are sometimes difficult answers, but they are there, and we can find them, and we can meet the challenges."

The Challenge Expanded...

The issues, changes, and challenges presented to symposium participants during the convening session were expanded in three plenary sessions. Each of the plenary sessions was designed to provide more indepth information for participants to draw upon during their discussion group activities.

Plenary Session One...The Impact of Social Issues

Plenary Session One focused on the impact of various social issues which are now, more than ever before, impacting on the economy. Dr. James A. Hefner, President of Jackson State University, discussed *the issues of diversity, economic disenfranchisement, homelessness, and the need for education*. Dr. Robert A. Holmes, Acting Director of the Southern Center for Studies in Public Policy and Professor of Political Science at Clark Atlanta University, explored further with symposium participants *the issues of education and the impact of the "Workforce 2000" trends on the educational community*. Finally, Ms. Chrystal J. Kellogg, President, Kellogg Associates, Inc., talked about *the issues of adolescent childbearing, drug abuse, and other health issues impacting on both the workforce and the workplace*.

As Plenary Session One began participants were reminded that 111 of the 159 counties of Georgia have an adult illiteracy rate of more than 33%, that 37% of students who enter the ninth grade in Georgia will not graduate with their peers, that 47% of all births are to young ladies age 17 and under, that 16% of our population has a drug problem, and that about 20% of our population is economically disenfranchised. Illiteracy, teen pregnancy, economic disenfranchisement, substance abuse, and homelessness...These are but a few of the issues which the public sector must deal with...But they are not stand alone issues, they all interrelate.

James A. Hefner
President, Jackson State University

"Economic disenfranchisement and homelessness have contributed to this dilemma...but, the one problem that confronts the poor more than any other is the lack of education."

"There is a disequilibrium condition between the needs of the future workplace and the ability of the workforce to meet those needs and this suggests an impending crisis," warned Dr. James Hefner. "If the year 2000 were here today we would have a workforce that seriously lacks the necessary skills to compete in the economic market place, whether you are in the public sector or not," he said. "Education, whether it is by restructuring the primary and secondary education system in America, business and industry and government retraining its current workforce, or colleges and universities moving toward programs of lifelong learning...Education remains the solution," Hefner said. He told symposium participants that even as they met the work force is changing, globalization is being defined more from the standpoint of competitive or comparative advantage rather than military prowess, and the crisis envisioned in Workforce 2000 is unfolding before our eyes.

According to Hefner, "economic disenfranchisement and homelessness have contributed to this dilemma." He told participants that "no one really knows the severity of homelessness, this growing phenomenon of economic disenfranchisement that affects a growing number of Americans, in many instances entire families," However, he said, "the one problem that confronts the poor more than any other is the lack of education." He continued his comments by telling participants that it will require creative and innovative efforts to build a new foundation for education. For Hefner, the foundation of a new and innovative future for our children and youth must be laid in our families and communities. "First and foremost," Hefner said, "complex correlations between employment, education, literacy and cultural values cannot be adequately addressed without addressing issues of individual and family responsibility." While parents, teachers, and administrators must cooperatively shoulder the responsibility, teachers and administrators, Hefner pointed out, must make sure that students have gained the language and other skills needed by a diverse population to succeed in today's economy. "Failure to actively participate in the development of a cadre of trained workers will ultimately mean an inability to function competitively in a global market place and an inability to achieve its goals," Hefner warned. "The educational community," he charged, "must keep at the top of its agenda the demands of the workplace and the needs of business and industry and government in order to more effectively respond to those needs." As he closed his remarks, Hefner reminded participants that "even though some of these projections and realizations are alarming, it is not a time for panic and disillusionment, rather, it is a time for leadership, commitment and collective wisdom."

"Nontraditional educational methods will be needed alongside our traditional structured educational system since we will have to educate and reeducate a population including adults who are not currently in the educational system."

Robert A. Holmes
Acting Director
Southern Center for
Studies
in Public Policy

Dr. Bob Holmes further emphasized that in developing solutions to the challenges we face, participants should address the improvement of our educational systems and the need for lifelong learning. Holmes pointed out that in addition to the new young entrants into the workforce, who will be entering from educational institutions, there will be workers who are reentering the workforce after forced or voluntary absences. "These reentrants will include," Holmes said, "those who have dropped out of the workforce for lack of skills or functional literacy as well as those who were formally incarcerated, those who are involved in the illegal economy or otherwise outside or alienated from the mainstream." "The educational community," he said, "needs to be more involved with the specialized agencies who work with these people in order to try to turn them around." According to Holmes this requires a massive commitment of resources that no one system can be expected to handle. "It means," Holmes said, "that colleges and universities, as well as the public and private sector, will have to work in concert in order to deal with the problems"...It means that..."nontraditional educational methods will be needed alongside our traditionally structured educational systems since we will have to educate and reeducate a population including adults who are not currently in the educational system.

"If we want to solve a problem we've got to make sure we know what the problem is, and in order to know what these problems are I want you to get personal."

Chyrstal Kellogg
Kellogg Associates, Inc.

In addition to providing participants further information on various social issues, Chrystal Kellogg told participants that they have to get "personal" with the problems we are facing. "I've been asked to talk with you about adolescent childbearing and childrearing, about substance abuse, and a whole host of other kinds of health issues...Personal issues," Ms. Kellogg said. But, she admonished participants, "if we want to solve a problem we've got to make sure we know what the problem is, and in order to know what these problems are I want you to get personal." "How many of you or somebody you know very close gave birth to a child or became a parent while you were a teenager?" she asked. "How many people do you know to whom 'that' happened?...How many people have you read about who are successful people, who are like you, who are here or who run their own businesses or have very valuable jobs who gave birth to a child or became a parent when they were a teenager?...How many of you, or people that you know very well sleep together or live together out of wedlock?...How many times have you seen people engage in 'that activity' on your television during prime time or on the big screen at one of the local cinemas?" "What we know to be true," Kellogg said, "is that our kids do what we do, not what we say...We are sending out confusing messages...What I want to suggest is that we send out confusing, and I submit dishonest, pieces of information to kids." Ms. Kellogg continued, "If they are in fact doing what we do then I think that suggests some things about what we might want to do in terms of a solution."

"I encourage you all to consider innovation at your own level, wheher it be local, State, or Federal...Because, people are paying attention...People are looking around, we are seeking solutions, you are seeking solutions, and together I think we can move the South forward into the next century...Respond to Challenge 21 with a joinder of both business, research, and government at all levels."

Plenary Session Two...The Impact and Challenge of Technology

Juliann Tenney
Co-Chair
Southern Technology Council

Ms. Juliann Tenney, who is Director of Economic and Corporate Development at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and Co-Chair of the Southern Technology Council, presented symposium participants an overview of the issue of technology and its impact on the public sector. "Technology," Tenney charged, "presents enormous implications for social change." As Tenney and the report of the Southern Technology Council Turning to Technology...A Strategic Plan for the Ninety's explained, traditional economic development in the South revolved around the three factors of production: land, labor, and capital. Since the early 1980s, however, southern states have begun trying to attract high-tech businesses and developing new jobs through such programs as targeted research and development, technology-based business incubators, telecommunications, science parks, technology transfer, and seed capital funds. The South's capacity for technology-based development, however, does not compare favorably with the North's, nor with those of other industrialized nations. According to Tenney two deficiencies, in particular, threaten regional economic progress...*the quality of the workforce's skills and knowledge, and the slow rate of technological innovation.* "Not only must all of us be educated in the basics, but," Tenny said, "our society must rid itself of the notion of finishing school." "Although we must address the issues of illiteracy and dropouts," she continued, "we must also embrace and encourage the notion of dropping in to learn new skills and to refine old ones." In this respect Tenney told participants that another issue which must be confronted throughout the region is the disparity of opportunity available to urban and rural, and rich and poor children. Through technology, she pointed out, we can overcome disparity. We can unite schools, colleges, universities, even whole neighborhoods via two-way satellite communication.

Using a slide-tape presentation and a summary of the Council's report, Ms. Tenney urged participants to consider the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1...Ensure that we have technically proficient new entrants in the labor market.
- Raise levels of math and science competencies by high school graduates.
- Increase the participation of women and minorities in scientific and technical occupations.
- Produce more flexible, adaptable and innovative technicians.
- Increase the number and quality of scientists, engineers, and technicians.

Goal 2...Upgrade skills in the current workforce.
- Expand and improve continuing education for more technically demanding work.
- Improve employers' technical education and training.
- Encourage workers to invest time and resources into upgrading and expanding their skills.

Goal 3...Improve and expand research and technology development.
- Attract and retain distinguished researchers in the region.
- Target state resources on research and technology development in strategic areas.
- Increase total public and private spending for research and development.
- Enlarge multi-institutional collaboration and international exchange.
- Expand research and development opportunities for small firms.

Goal 4...Ensure rapid commercialization of new ideas and new technologies.

- Encourage more entrepreneurial behavior on the part of universities and their faculties.
- Accelerate the dissemination of research results.
- Increase access to equity capital for early stage financing.
- Expand special support services to new, technology-based businesses.

Goal 5...Ensure widespread deployment and effective utilization of technology.

- Make the best management and production practices routine among employers in the region.
- Increase the availability of debt financing for modernization and expansion.
- Increase cooperation among firms and industries to achieve greater economies of scale and scope.

Goal 6...Integrate science and technology into state policy.

- Improve states' science and technology policy and planning.
- Change public perception of science and technology from threat to opportunity.
- Adopt more responsible management and stewardship of technology.

In closing Ms. Tenney pointed out how hard it is for public sector entities to fund change, and she encouraged participants to convey to the private sector, to the business community, to citizens, how hard it is to work in government, and how hard it is to get our jobs done. "I encourage you all to consider innovation at your own level, whether it be local, State, or Federal...Because," Tenney said, "people are paying attention...People are looking around, we are seeking solutions, you are seeking solutions, and together I think we can move the South forward into the next century...Respond to ***Challenge 21*** with a joinder of both business, research, and government at all levels."

Plenary Session Three...Ethics and The Public Sector's Image

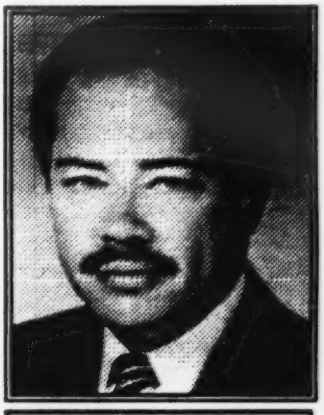
Plenary sessions one and two gave symposium participants the opportunity to gain additional insight on the impact various social issues and technology are having on the public sector's workforce and services. Plenary session three, however, was designed to encourage them to consider the effect of perception...the public's perception of government and the public service...of how well government does its job...of the worth of public employees and the public sector's perception of itself. As Rex Buffington, the Executive Director of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service, put it, "there's a great gap between what people think and what is really true about public service." Buffington reminded participants that the image of public service doesn't fit reality and that it is up to the public service to change that image. "The future of the public service is dependent to a large degree on the image of public service," Buffington said. "How can we expect to attract the best and the brightest to public service careers if they have a negative impression of it...if they only hear negative things about it all the time?" he asked. "All the things we've talked about at this conference are extremely important, but," Buffington said, "I do think that the image of public service is essential to the future of public service and we've just got to improve it."

Rex G. Buffington, II.
Executive Director
John C. Stennis Center
For Public Service

"We have to tell the taxpayers what we're doing...We have to convince them that what we're doing is of value to them...and, unless we do we can't really expect them to be supportive in the way that we need them to be supportive of our efforts."

How do we improve the image of government? "By example," he continued, "we have to commit ourselves to being an example...being an example of the best in public service." In addition, Buffington pointed out that public servants can't assume that there is understanding on the public's part, or even overt interest. "It is up to us, to each of us as individual public servants," he said, "to demonstrate that we are deserving of the public's trust." And, he continued, "we have to tell the taxpayers what we're doing...We have to convince them that what we're doing is of value to them...and, unless we do we can't really expect them to be supportive in the way that we need them to be supportive of our efforts. "Finally, Buffington urged participants to strive to convince the taxpayer that those in the public service are listening to them and that they are being heard. "We need to look for opportunities," he said, "opportunities, to create focus groups, and advisory groups, and task forces that can have citizen participation...that can bring them into the process of government and allow them to work shoulder to shoulder with us...and allow them to really see the things that we are doing."

> ***"The solution to all this is very simple...I think our challenge is, if we are talking about ethics in the workforce, in the public workforce, in the public sector; our challenge is to make, to conclusively make, ethics as important a part of our workplace, our hiring practices and our firing practices as are all the other criteria..."***



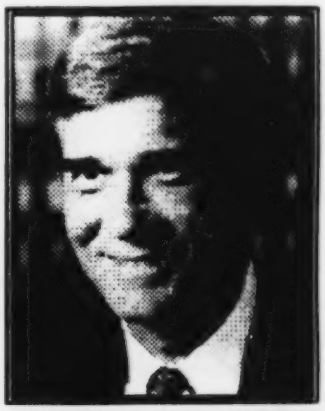
Robert L. Barr, Jr.
Former U. S. Attorney

Robert L. Barr, Jr., President of the Southeastern Legal Foundation and former U. S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, addressed the issue of ethics and its relation to the public sector's image. Barr began his comments with an overview of the concept of ethics. He pointed out that all societies seem to have some concept of ethical behavior and ethical norms and that these concepts vary a great deal from society to society. Even within a society, Barr said, there are variations in what is considered ethical and unethical, what is considered corrupt or not corrupt. While he pointed out that corruption has always been with us, he asked rhetorically if we are having to deal with more corruption today because of certain historical factors or because of our current economic and political climate. Barr said that the three major areas of crime that concerned him the most as U. S. Attorney were drugs, white collar crime, and corruption. "Drugs," Barr said, "are destroying our society, but, corruption is bad because it leads to people having no confidence, or very low confidence or esteem in government, a lack of respect for government and an attitude that if government can't respect itself; and if government officials and public servants don't adhere to the law, why should non-public servants." For Barr these three areas of crime share a common base, "they all reflect a disintegration of our values," he said. While much of the corruption we witnessed a few years ago was drug related, Barr said, in recent years most of the Federal prosecutions of corrupt public officials relate to such governmental decision-making functions as zoning, rezoning, and licensing. Barr told participants, "Clearly, greed plays a role in all of this, usually a predominant role; but there are increasing instances in which loyalty and ambition, two characteristics that, if not abused, are positive, also have led to criminal behavior."

"The solution to all this is very simple;" he said, "we must, and I think our challenge is, if we are talking about ethics in the workforce, in the public workforce, in the public sector; our challenge is to make, to conclusively make, ethics as important a part of our workplace, our hiring practices and our firing practices as are all the other criteria; salaries, the work environment, the physical work environment, people's capabilities, their education; ethics needs to rank up there explicitly and specifically and consistently with those other criteria that we use to evaluate people coming into our workplace and it has to be just as much a part of the explicit criteria for firing or removing people from that workplace. "This, Barr concluded, "is even more important for the public sector because we set the standard for the rest of society."

"All of us, regardless of the origin of our selection for public service, are answerable to the people at every moment of our lives, not just when we're in the office, not just when we're in the workplace, but every single moment."

Michael J. Bowers, the Attorney General of Georgia, told symposium participants that the legal foundation of ethics in Georgia was the State's Constitution. Specifically, Article One, Section Two, Paragraph One, which states..."All government of right originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole." "And, most importantly," Bowers said, "the second sentence which reads, 'All public officials are servants and trustees of the people, amenable to them at all times.'" Bowers reminded participants that as public officials, be they appointed, elected, or whatever, they are public servants and trustees of the people. He said, "All of us, regardless of the origin of our selection for public service, are answerable to the people at every moment of our lives, not just when we're in the office, not just when we're in the workplace, but every single moment."



Michael J. Bowers
Attorney General of Georgia

As he concluded his remarks, Bowers told participants that the concern for ethics and ethical behavior is timeless. He pointed to the Georgia State motto and the three words inscribed...Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation. "Those three words," Bowers explained, "are three of the four cardinal virtues from Plato's Republic...The cardinal virtues of the public man...Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation...And perhaps the one that's toughest of all, Courage...Courage to stand up for what you believe in, to stand up for what's right." "What we have discussed here today," Bowers said, "is timeless, it's never out of fashion...You will see more emphasis on this as time goes by because, as we see so readily in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, people have awaken to the idea that government belongs to them...It is not the domain of someone appointed by birth, by power, by wealth...It belongs to the people, is founded on their will and for their benefit only."

Personalizing The Message and Strategizing Action...

Following the opening session and each of the three plenary sessions, symposium participants met in small work groups to discuss in depth the trends, changes, issues, and challenges presented. Each of the ten individual work groups was made up of a mixture of twelve to twenty Federal, State, and local executives, managers, and personnel officers. With the help of a cadre of facilitators and additional information provided through supplemental handouts, including the report ***The Southeast's 21st Challenge...***, participants had the opportunity to personalize the information, discuss the issues and challenges presented in depth with their peers, and develop possible solutions and actions they could undertake when they returned to their workplaces. The following summarizes these group discussions and their recommendations with respect to:

Workforce 2000 Perspectives...

Most symposium participants agreed that "Workforce 2000" projections and issues were already affecting them and that the demographic material presented during the symposium was in fact already part of their working experience. A recurring theme voiced by participants was that the public sector is already having problems attracting quality employees and that this problem would only get worse given the data presented. While it was generally agreed that in order to attract and maintain a highly qualified workforce, the public sector, collectively and individually, must address the issue of compensation; the overarching concern of symposium participants was the negative image of public service work as a

barrier to competitive luring of new employees in an ever-tightening labor market. In general, the primary problems which seem to be already affecting most Atlanta area public employers include low public status, low compensation, too much "red tape," and the difficulties inherent in dealing with the public.

With regard to attracting new employees, it is felt that changes need to be made in recruiting and hiring practices in order to shorten the time it takes to bring a person into the service. Public employers need to better utilize current authorities, and urge the development of new authorities, to allow expanded use of innovative strategies for recruitment and hiring, for improving the workplace environment, for accommodating family-work life needs, and to offer other workplace benefits now commonplace in the private sector. There was strong agreement that whatever strategies are devised, public sector managers need to become more sensitive to the needs and perspectives of women and minorities, and the need to manage a more diverse workforce.

Participants did, however, recognize the pitfalls of generalizing events and problems. For example, while many parts of the Atlanta area, and the region as a whole, face skill shortages, there are nevertheless pockets of labor surpluses and incidences of employer cutbacks that run counter to the general trends. It was therefore argued that more attention should be given to developing mechanisms that bring these two situations together for the benefit of all.

The group discussions led to agreement that the public service needs to find ways to entice new workers into the service, as well as invest in training of the current workforce. While participants recognized that funding for most public functions is becoming harder to come by, and that budget cuts always seem to impact first on human resource areas, especially training, they still regarded training as essential to attracting, as well as maintaining, qualified employees and providing quality service to the public.

It was emphatically argued that management at all levels of the public sector must be better informed of the emerging social and economic changes and trained on how to effectively address these issues. Many felt that all too often the blame and responsibility for work-related problems is put on "employees" and that management must acknowledge they play a greater part in any work situation. Training is therefore needed which deals with specific areas such as, "How to train your workforce with little money...Individual productivity...Recognition beyond money...and How to upgrade employee skills."

In terms of retaining employees, it was felt that awards and recognition for good work are important tools to not only improve employee morale, but to assist in more effective utilization of employees as well as the organization. It was agreed that recognition programs must be expanded by public employers.

In order to address the "Workforce 2000" issues, symposium participants believe that Atlanta area public employers must consider:

- **Policy changes to allow a more rapid hiring process**. Such changes must...
  - Shorten the period from applicant interest to decision to hire;
  - Delegate authority for hiring decisions to the lowest level possible within organizations;
  - Ensure screening and applicant testing procedures are job related, flexible, and equitable;
  - Provide better training of managers on the operation and utilization of recruitment and hiring procedures;
  - Include more detailed job analysis in order to better identify the actual knowledge, skill, and ability requirements needed to perform on the job; and
  - Identify and remove current obstructions to the recruitment and hiring process.

- **Marketing public employment and public service as a career.** Such public relations efforts must focus on all levels of the public service and be designed to counteract negative images and to strengthen the realization that public servants do important and valuable work and that such work is not only beneficial to the community but is intrensically valuable.

- **Expansion of recruitment efforts to include prodominantly minority and female institutions, as well as other nontraditional sources, including technical schools and high schools. Become more aggressive in recruitment activities by utilizing: all forms of media; positive public relations; and human resource, technical, and managerial professionals in recruitment efforts.**

- **Innovative strategies to attract workers and accommodate their special needs such as: student stay-in-school programs, work-study programs, cooperative education programs, apprenticeships, internships, expanded use of volunteers, adopt-a-school programs, flexitime, flexiplace, provision of day and elder care, literacy training, and cultural diversity training.**

- **Undertaking efforts to revise current employment law as it relates to the employment of aliens within government.** Encourage the expansion of training activities to include offering "English as a Second Language" classes as well as classes in other languages.

- **Working to improve the overall compensation of public servants and the expansion of benefits to provide incentives for attracting and retaining employees; and in the absence of increased revenue to fund competitive compensation and benefit programs, consider establishing alternative compensation programs such as bonuses, expanded performance pay, and skill-based pay.**

- **Raising the retirement age and/or providing incentives for those considering retiring to stay in the public service.** For example, the provision of bonuses similar to re-up pay provided to military personnel who reenlist, especially for high-tech and/or hard-to-fill jobs; and the removal of barriers which currently prevent retired workers from returning to public service without loss of retirement pay and/or benefits.

- **Developing procedures which allow more portability of retirement programs.**

- **Expansion of awards and recognition programs that reward employees for exceptional productivity and publicize positive public service and employee conduct.**

- **Activities to identify and upgrade the skill level of current employees.**

- **Expanding all current training activities to ensure the upgrading of current employees and provide pre-employment training designed to enhance the skills of potential employees and expand the general recruitment pool.**

Social Issues Which Impact on the Availability of Applicants and the Performance of Current Employees...

Symposium participants recognized that many previously viewed "social issues" such as adolescent childbearing, the high school dropout rate, economic disenfranchisement, homelessness, adult illiteracy, and drug abuse are now becoming, more than ever before, economic issues that are impacting on the availability of qualified workers. While participants felt the actions required to deal with the general "Workforce 2000" issues would also help improve the situation relating to various social problems, they argued that more specific action is also needed. In addition, while most of the discussion and recommendations dealt with the impact of social issues as they related to the availability of qualified workers, participants also recognized the impact these issues are having on the provision of programs

and services. There was considerable concern expressed that the amount of public funds available to provide social programs and services, including education and training, is being stretched to the limit because of the rise in the number of teen pregnancies, high school dropouts, and individuals falling into poverty and homelessness as well as the increase in the number of adults who have educational limitations and in the incidence of drug abuse.

Participants worried that their respective agencies' and jurisdictions' ability to provide quality programs and services is being threatened on two fronts, on the one hand budget restrictions are having a serious impact on their ability to do those things necessary to attract and retain a quality workforce as competition with the private sector increases because of the worsening workplace/workforce mismatch, and on the other hand the shifting of any limited funds that might be available in order to improve competitiveness will surely mean a cutback in some services. It is important therefore that public employers expand their efforts to educate the public about the services and programs provided, the cost of providing those programs and services, and the increasing cost of obtaining and retaining a qualified workforce.

With regard to the impact of social issues on their ability to obtain and retain quality workers, participants emphasized that public employers must:

- **Become more sensitive to the needs of a diverse population and workforce.** This means not only being sensitive to the needs of women and minorities but taking proactive steps to address and accommodate those needs.

- **Become an active partner with the educational system to address the failure-to-graduate rate.**
  - Develop mentoring programs where public employees work with at-risk students on approved administrative leave.
  - Work with educators to redesign curriculum to better address the needs of the workplace and emphasize good work habits and life skills.
  - Expand the concept of adopt-a-school from simply providing volunteers to tutor at-risk students a couple of hours a week to continued cooperative intervention. This should include the provision of supportive in-kind services, the donation or loan of equipment, and more liberal use of available human resources to assist in instruction and advise on program/curriculum design and overall management of the school.

- **Expand contacts with schools to include making staff available to speak regularly on public service issues and careers.** This means that such activities should not be limited to one "career day" activity a year. For example, it might be appropriate for a mobile "public career program," which informs youth as well as adults about a cross section of public services, programs, and careers from the perspective of all three levels of government, i.e., Federal, State, and local, through high-tech advanced media, to be cooperatively developed and scheduled to be shown at area junior high schools, high schools, technical schools, colleges, and other functions on an ongoing and recurring basis.

  The educational community, on the other hand, should consider:

  - Changing policy so as to allow retired public employees with advanced skills, such as math and science, to teach in the public school system.

  - Being more receptive to cooperative endeavors with public employers.

- **Consider providing for child and elder care, as well as expanding benefit programs to include financial and family budgeting advice, legal services, relocation assistance, and career planning.** In this regard...

- Where employers cannot provide full programs they should devise ways to share costs of child care/elder care programs with employees; and employers should...
- Encourage school systems to establish child care facilities in schools and provide instruction on child care for teen mothers,
- Encourage hospitals to use vacant space for child/elder care, and
- Expand child care to include after-school programs.

- **Develop and expand programs to identify current employees who may have educational limitations and provide basic literacy training.** In addition, ongoing assessment of employee training needs must be conducted and, as needed, refresher training provided.

- **Promote to concept of "lifelong learning" by developing programs to encourage and assist current employees to continue their education and training on government time and at government expense.** While emphasis should be placed on the acquisition and/or improvement of knowledges and skills required to perform on the job, more consideration should be given to the acquisition and/or improvement of knowledges and skills which will help the employee to advance in the public service from a career standpoint. This means current restrictions on the use of government funds for education and training that are not directly related to the employees' "current job" must be revised.

- **Develop and expand employee assistance programs as well as alternative programs for drug abusers.**

- **Develop appropriate and equitable testing procedures which will help public employers ensure a drug-free workplace while at the same time ensuring the employees' rights to privacy and due process.**

- **Consider developing and expanding programs relating to the health, safety, and welfare of all employees.** This includes taking those measures necessary to ensure that each employee has a work environment which allows them to perform their job activities comfortably, safely, and without undue risk to their health. In addition, the work environment should be attractive and comfortable for visitors and allow for positive professional and customer contacts.

Technology...

As a group, symposium participants focused on the importance of technology in the workplace and issues that require immediate attention in order for the public service to increase productivity and maintain competitiveness. Participants felt that the public sector is too slow in recognizing and implementing technological advancements. The primary "blames" for this are the lack of funds; the slow process for approval and acquisitions; and the fear and insecurity many employees, including managers, feel toward new technologies. Many participants argued that the public sector was "out of touch" with the rapid changes in technology; did not provide sufficient training of their staffs in the use of new technologies, including the training of technicians so that they can "stay on top of their fields"; and failed to sufficiently plan for the most efficient and economical use of new equipment, including networking equipment.

In terms of "networking" symposium participants strongly believe that the public sector needs more standardization and linkage capability that will allow users to "tap" each other's data. While participants recognized issues of privacy they strongly felt there is a tremendous potential for efficiency gains if agencies and public entities were willing and capable of sharing information through automation. Participants believe that:

- **More emphasis must be placed on using technology to enhance the public workplace and provide more efficient and higher quality services to citizens.** To do this...
  - Public agencies and entities must provide leadership and act as role models in the use of technology;
  - Conduct cost analysis to show the effectiveness and efficiency of new technologies;
  - Provide orientation and training to "sell" technology both to the public and to employees; and
  - Work to secure sufficient funding to allow for expansion and use of new technologies.

- **Efforts must be developed and expanded to link and coordinate agency automation systems so as to allow greater flexibility and the sharing of data.**

- **Public users must work together with vendors to develop flexible computer hardware and software.**

Image and Ethics...

As has already been mentioned, the overarching concern that surfaced in discussion groups was the negative image of the public service. While some public employers are making a major assault on the image issue, and these actions are producing positive results in the form of enhanced recruitment and service delivery posture, participants agreed a more comprehensive, coordinated inter-jurisdictional effort would pay dividends. It was agreed that the best way to improve the image of the public service is to do excellent work, but participants also agreed that doing good work and receiving recognition for that work were two different things. Public agencies and entities must take measures to bolster public opinion.

In terms of ethics, those attending ***Challenge 21*** agreed that publicized incidences of corruption further damage an already negative image. Even the definition of "ethical conduct" is not uniformly agreed upon. As a group participants agreed that high ethical standards are essential to maintain public trust, and the standards for the public sector should be higher than those followed in the private sector. However, some participants argued that the media failed to equitably cover ethics violations, corruption, and other white collar crimes. Overall, participants felt that public employers should:

- **Develop better relationships with the media.**

- **Develop more standardized codes of conduct, then publish and publicize those codes.**

- **Develop training programs on ethics and the conduct of public employees.** Such programs should be required training for all employees and managers, including political appointees.

- **Ensure that managers take time to talk with their employees about ethical behavior and proper conduct, both on and off the job.**

- **Urge their Local, State, and Federal lawmakers to pass legislation enacting and/or strengthening codes of ethics and conduct.** Such legislation should require all newly elected officials, as well as political appointees, to attend training on ethics and the proper conduct of public servants.

- **Review and revise hiring and selection procedures to ensure that ethics and proper ethical conduct are factors considered during the selection process.**

- **Establish a work environment that is conducive to good ethical behavior.**

- **Stop "bad-mouthing" other government agencies and entities.**

- **Develop and publicize avenues for identifying, reporting, and dealing with illegal, unethical, and other inappropriate behavior by public employees and officials.** Such programs and avenues of communication must guarantee equity and confidentiality, and ensure that any disciplinary procedures provide for due process.

- **Do much more in the way of positive public relations.** For example, the establishment of inter-jurisdictional employee/agency recognition programs; using all forms of media to inform the public about programs and services; using resources to help communities; and establishing better linkages with citizens by involving them via task forces, advisory groups, etc.

Objectives Agreed Upon and Actions to be Taken...

After participants discussed the trends, changes, issues, and challenges Atlanta area public sector employers are, and will be, facing they were asked to reconvene in jurisdictional caucuses. Here they met for the first time with peers from their own level of government to devise some specific actions to take when they returned to their respective agencies or entities. The following is a summary of the objectives agreed upon and actions planned.

Federal participants met and agreed to:

- **Improve service.** The business of government is service, and the best way to improve the public's perception of public servants is to provide outstanding service.

- **Advertise successes.** If Federal agencies and employees are doing a good job, don't keep it a secret. Actively seek ways to publicize the services provided and what is being done to improve or provide new services. Cite positive examples of how tax dollars are spent.

- **Provide front line training.** Keeping in mind the fact that the "Front Line" is what the public sees, Federal employers will make sure that employees who represent their agencies or offices represent them well. One way to do this is to invest in proper training, particularly in customer service training.

- **Convene and support public contact person conferences and/or training on an intergovernmental basis.**

- **Establish ongoing coalitions with State and local public agencies and entities.** Most people refer to public servants as "the government." Recognizing that the lines between the various levels of government are often blurred, Federal agencies will work to improve the perception of all levels of government.

- **Anticipate and plan for increases/decreases in service requirements caused by demographic shifts.** Federal employers will develop procedures designed to anticipate and plan for changes in the makeup of our workforce due to the changes taking place in the labor pool.

- **Develop workplace programs to combat illiteracy.** Federal employers will work with appropriate forces to identify "at-risk" youth and find ways to help them. They will also support volunteerism among our employees.

- **Seek new technology and support its use where appropriate.**

- **Employ technology to meet the new challenges being faced.**

- **Improve and increase the training of managers and empower them to deal with the changes and increasingly diverse workforce.**

- **Form partnerships with educational institutions and with representatives of the private sector to overcome problems we can't solve alone.**

- **Work with the educational community to change the focus of education from merely meeting college entry requirements to meeting the requirements of the world of work. Work with educational institutions to redesign curricula to meet the needs of the workplace.**

- **Assess the knowledge and skills required for success in the workplace and assist employees in acquiring them. Assure the availability of continuing education for employees at all levels, and specifically in rapidly changing occupations/fields.**

- **Continue to modify the personnel system so that it supports the acquisition and retention of the kinds of employees, with the kinds of skills, we need to provide quality services.**

- **Establish an Atlanta "Clerical Academy."** The Regional Office of the U. S. Department of Labor will take the lead in this activity which will be designed to provide both pre-employment and post-employment training on government time and at government expense in order to expand the recruitment pool of qualified workers available. Based on the success of this preliminary phase, the "academy" concept will be expanded into other areas and fields.

- **Explore the possibility of multi-agency funding of staff positions and take a more active role in the development and use of intern and cooperative education programs.**

- **Establish mechanisms to share agency experience and expertise relating to managing diversity.**

- **Provide management, supervisory, and staff training on managing diversity.**

State participants set the following objectives:

- **To establish procedures which will provide for positive ongoing recruitment both through traditional and nontraditional avenues.**

- **To ensure that State recruitment activities focus on all sectors of society and are designed to fully consider and address the needs of women and minorities.**

- **To establish mechanisms to review and recommend changes in current procedures which will increase the flexibility of departments and managers in all areas of personnel management including selection, classification, compensation, and especially hiring.**

- **To establish programs and procedures relating to:**
  - **child and elder care**
  - **flexible leave**
  - **flexible workplace and work hours**
  - **job sharing**
  - **executive compensation**

- **To improve and expand current efforts in training and employee development.** To do this...
  - Identify those who are in need of basic skills training and provide it.
  - Reanalyze jobs to better identify the knowledges, skills, and abilities required and insure employees are properly trained to perform their jobs.

- **To expand the employee awards and recognition program and better publicize the positive activities of State employees and agencies.**

- **To improve educational efforts at all levels.** To accomplish this objective State agencies will...
  - Push for funding to improve the compensation of teachers so that the State can attract and retain the highest quality of educator in the classroom;
  - Reward and publicize educational achievement; and
  - Reduce teacher involvement with non-instructional activities.

- **To take whatever means are necessary to improve the image of State government.**

- **To establish procedures to facilitate the mobility of public employees between all levels of government and into and out of the private sector.**

Local participants set the following objectives:

- **For local entities training must be a top priority.** In order to accomplish this objective local entities will...
  - Work with policy makers to find ways to fund sufficient training activities required to insure that quality services are provided the public;
  - Provide training to keep current employees up-to-date on the new technologies impacting on the workplace; and
  - Work with the educational community to insure that those coming from the school system have the knowledges and skills required to perform local government jobs.

- **To return confidence in government, both policy makers and employees must adhere to the highest ethical standards.** Each jurisdiction should adopt and stress a Code of Ethics. Employees must be trained in "customer service."

- **Efforts must be undertaken to improve relations with the media.** Government issues are usually extremely complex and the "sound bite" method of news reporting leads to gross misunderstandings. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that the public is kept informed and told about the positive activities of government.

- **Efforts must be undertaken to make benefit programs more portable so that expertise can be disbursed without the employee having to suffer economic loss.**

- **Local entities must expand efforts relating to the provision of child and elder care as well as the adoption of other programs which will help local government be more competitive in the job market.** This includes improving compensation of local government and educational employees.

Participants from the educational community met and agreed on the following objectives:

- **Interfacing of the three levels of government, Federal, State, and local, to address educational deficiencies and develop a coordinated plan of action is required.**

- **The educational community must recognize that cultural diversity exists in the workplace and develop curriculum to address and reflect the cultural makeup of the population and the workforce.**

- **Educational systems' workforces should mirror the diversity of the community and the student body.**

- **School systems must pay more attention to cultural nuances of particular cultural groups and integrate these characteristics into the system so as to effectively raise and maintain quality education.**

- **Schools must take a lead role in ensuring that appreciation for ethics and values are instilled in students.**

- **Local, State, and Federal budgets must be redirected to make funding available to ensure effective utilization of technology.**

- **Programs must be developed to provide early childhood intervention for children of substance abuse parents. In addition, substance abuse awareness programs, as well as programs designed to raise the level of student awareness of parenting and life skills, must become a reality.**

- **Educational entities from local school systems through the university system must take action to ensure that their administrators and teachers are aware of and fully appreciate the implications of the "Workforce 2000" trends, changes, issues, and challenges; and that programs are established to ensure that the educational community plans for and addresses these challenges not only as a provider of service but also as an employer.**

Where Do We Go From Here?

As this report has described, ***Challenge 21*** brought together over 200 of the top Federal, State, and local public sector managers and human resource professionals from throughout the Metropolitan Atlanta area. These public servants:

Gained a deeper appreciation of the challenges they face...

While many of those who participated came to the symposium with some knowledge and understanding of the trends, changes, and challenges facing all employers, they left with a greater appreciation of the severity of the situation they face as public employers. While both public and private sector employers are beginning to feel the impact of the *workplace-workforce mismatch*, the public sector employer is being forced into the "game" with limited conditioning and meager resources.

Just as many private sector businesses complain that they must compete in the global economy on an "uneven playing field" because some foreign competitors' costs of operation are offset through direct government investment and support which U. S. businesses do not have; public sector employers are being forced to compete on an uneven field because their labor market competitors have unfair financial advantages. Where the increased costs associated with the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a quality workforce by private employers are "passed on" to the consumer through the higher costs of goods and

services, and such "pass ons" are accepted as normal costs of business by the consumer/taxpayer; the public sector employer not only cannot "pass on" increased costs of operation, they often find great resistance on the part of the consumers of their services, the taxpayers, and their elected representatives for increased budgets. While competitive pay and benefits; pleasant and comfortable work environments; and the provision of such incentives as bonus pay, child and elder care, employee assistance, wellness and health programs, etc., are seen as "good business practices" in the private sector, they are viewed as extravagant in the public sector. Without the ability to offer such "good business incentives" the public employer simply cannot compete with the private sector employer for quality workers.

Not only are public sector employers finding it more and more difficult to compete in the labor market, the same trends and changes which affect the staffing of public entities affect their ability to provide efficient, effective, and equitable programs and services. For example, the Public Health Service, through its network of State and local health agencies, is responsible for providing health care and services to low income mothers and their children...And, current demographic patterns show that births to low income mothers are rising which means the network must provide more service to a greater number of clients...Which means increased costs for health workers, facilities, equipment, and medicine...At the same time the number of qualified health service workers coming into the labor market falls short of the demand. The public employer's ability to compete with private health care providers and offer competitive pay and benefits to attract applicants from the shrinking pool of new health care workers is limited. Even if the taxpayers and the legislature approve an increase in the public entities' budget, that increase will probably be small and earmarked for program services...equipment, medicine, etc., and not salaries and expenditures for human resources...Not for the increased costs of recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining quality staff. *Symposium participants found that the greatest challenge to the public employer is the need to improve the image of the public service and foster greater public trust so that taxpayers will provide the financial support needed to build the quality public workforce required to provide citizens with quality services.*

And, collaboratively strategized and developed actions to address the challenges faced...

Participants not only learned to better appreciate the trends, changes, and challenges occurring, they had the opportunity for the first time to collaboratively strategize and develop action plans to address these challenges. Based on participant critiques of the symposium, the greatest accomplishment of ***Challenge 21*** was the fact that managers and human resource professionals from all three levels of the public sector were able to actually sit down and discuss collectively the problems they face. As can be seen from this report, the collective wisdom of this group resulted in the identification of specific actions which, if taken, will help Atlanta's public sector employers attract, hire, and retain the quality workers needed to provide citizens with quality service.

But, where do we go from here?

Now that the symposium is over, now that the action plans have been drawn and the report written...Where do we go? How do we continue the momentum of ***Challenge 21***? How do we accomplish the actions planned?

First, Atlanta public managers and human resource professionals who attended the symposium must *spread the word*. Those who participated must personalize the message, then spread the message to those who did not attend. Each participant must become, as Rex Buffington pointed out, a role model, and that model must be an example of the best the public service has to offer. Those who attended ***Challenge 21*** are at the level of their respective organizations where they can cause change, they can implement action, if not throughout their agency and/or the public service, at least throughout their respective entity.

Where the actions planned, and reported here, can be implemented at the local entity level, ***Challenge 21*** participants must ensure implementation. Where the actions planned cannot be implemented without

higher level approval, change in policy, or legislative action, ***Challenge 21*** participants must work to facilitate such approval, change, and action.

Most importantly those who attended ***Challenge 21*** must continue to build upon the cooperative, collaborative endeavors of the symposium. By uniting the abilities and collective influence of the Federal Executive Board, the Governor's Development Council, the Federal Personnel Council, the State Personnel Council, as well as groups and organizations such as the Georgia Municipal Association, the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, the Metro Atlanta Chapter of the International Personnel Management Association, and the Georgia Chapter of the American Society of Public Administration, a united front may be formed. While each of these entities serve an individual purpose, by joining together and forming a "public service united way," an Atlanta Public Service Commission, similar to the Georgia 21 Commission, should be formed. Membership in this "commission" must include representatives from each of these entities and be representative of all metro area public employers. Through such a united effort, the collaborative focus of ***Challenge 21*** will continue.

Where do we go from here? Only time and the collaborative will and efforts of Atlanta public sector employers will tell. For those who attended *Challenge 21*, we must proceed to *Build Tomorrow's Public Service.*

Appreciation Is Extended To...

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